

SECRET

ER-6-9751

ILLEGIB

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence 27 April 1955

SUBJECT : Project for an Earth Satellite Vehicle

1. The project for an earth satellite vehicle has now reached a stage where a Governmental decision is urgently required. The TCP (Killian) Report recommended that a very small artificial satellite be developed. Since that recommendation was made, the Executive Committee of the U. S. National Committee for the International Geophysical Year recommended the launching of a small satellite vehicle for scientific purposes in connection with the observation of the International Geophysical Year. In the course of discussions within the Government it has been generally agreed that, if this were to be done, the project should be carried out overtly by the National Science Foundation as part of its program for the International Geophysical Year. If this is to be done, a favorable decision must be made immediately.

25X1 2. In the event of such a decision, the actual technical development would be carried out by the Department of Defense at the request of the National Science Foundation. The actual launching of several small satellite vehicles would be carried out under security precautions as the launching techniques are classified but all other factors of the project would be unclassified. It is estimated that the total cost would be in the neighborhood of [] of which approximately three-quarters would probably be contributed by the Department of Defense, since the major part of these costs would have to be incurred in any case in connection with the development of ballistic missiles. The remaining 25X1 [] would have to be found by the National Science Foundation, either from a new Congressional appropriation or from some other source.

3. Procedurally, the simplest way to bring this matter up for prompt decision would be in connection with the TCP Report. The recommendation for a small satellite (C. 8.) has been referred by the National Security Council to the Department of Defense for comment in conjunction with the CIA. Accordingly, it would be wholly appropriate for the Secretary of Defense and yourself to join in a favorable report on this recommendation to the NSC, recommending that the project go

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forward under the auspices of the National Science Foundation. If the matter is to be handled in this manner, however, it is highly desirable that this particular TCP recommendation be reported on immediately and separately, without waiting for reports on all the other recommendations. Accordingly, you may wish to recommend that such action be taken forthwith. For your information, I should advise you that there is understood to be much support for this project in the Pentagon but the rate of progress toward any kind of decision in that imposing building seems to be little better than glacial.

(Dictated but not read by:)/*m*

RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.
Special Assistant to the Director
for Planning and Coordination

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Special Assistant to the Director
for Planning and Coordination

SA/PC/DCI:RMB:djm

O-DCI

✓ T-SA/PC/DCI Subject

1-SA/PC/DCI Chrono

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To: RMBH.

Buck Weaver called last Friday
with the information on ESV ✓
in the attached memo.

DEA.
Noted RMB/mr.

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ER 7-1216

14 June 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Earth Satellite Program

1. On 10 June 1955 I was informed by Mr. Charles Weaver (OSD, R & D) that Mr. Quarles, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Research and Development, has organized a Department of Defense group directly responsible to his office under Mr. Gene Kline which will study the various proposals for an ESV. They will be concerned solely with the scientific and production problems involved and their action will probably not be coordinated with State and CIA until a final proposal is agreed on, although Mr. Weaver told me they will most likely include an observer from the National Science Foundation.

2. In respect to the Department of Defense responsibility for coordinating their progress on ESV with State and CIA, Mr. Weaver said that Mr. Quarles was in favor of reviving the OCB Study Group suggestion by having General Erskine propose such a group to manage and plan the psychological and political ramifications of the program. This group would also presumably include a representative from the National Science Foundation and possibly a member of the U.S. IGY National Committee.

25X1


PCS/DCI

25X1

cc: AD/SI
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